

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

**Post World War II America in Throes of Death: Reading Lie Down in Darkness
the Vichian Way**

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Approval Letter

This thesis, submitted to the Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Rajendra Acharya, entitled “Post World War II America in Throes of Death: Reading *Lie Down in Darkness the Vichian Way*” has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

William Styron's debut novel *Lie Down in Darkness* recounts the disintegration and decline of a formerly wealthy Southern family. The novel written in a complex experiment with flashback, interior monologue, and third person omniscient perspective presents in its very texture the complexity that the post-War generation had to live through. Bleak is the view of human condition and human nature, as it was bound to, given the plight of the war-worn and bomb-torn world in the aftermath of the devastating Second World War. Novel is about the disintegration of a southern family, the Loftises. The immediate setting is the funeral of one of the daughters, Peyton, a suicide. But the conflicts between the narcissistic, alcoholic father and the emotionally disturbed mother, the hate between mother and daughter, and the near incestuous love of the father for Peyton— all contributors to the characters' disillusionment and the suicide itself—are unfolded in flashbacks.

The novel makes a rewarding reading if read against the schema of Giambattista Vico's notion of history as divided into three ages: the Age of Gods, of Heroes, and of Men. This novel fits into the schema of the Ages of Men, since, according to Vico, the age of Men is symbolic of death and devastation, lacking in nobility both of ideals and character. In the novel too, it is the images of disintegration, both family and personality, that leads to ultimate death of individuals and society as a whole.

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I. Introduction

Literature is a reflection of social reality to certain extent. Put another way, reading a literary piece should be able to give one a rough sense of what the socio-political and economic condition of the time was when the work was being produced or the writer was in the formative stage. In this context, the Second World War, with its devastating and debilitating effect on human civilization, can be seen as a monumental case for scholars to investigate as to how much formative and/or destructive effect it had on the people of the times. Sure enough, the sense of death and devastation would be recorded in the numerous pages of literary outputs that would follow the war experience the world over. William Styron's first novel *Lie Down in Darkness* (1951), bears witness to the moral, spiritual and social decay of the post-World Second era.

William Styron, is a South American novelist whose explorations of difficult historical and moral questions earned him a place among the leading literary figures of the post-World War II generation. William Clark Styron Jr. was born on June 11, 1925, in Newport News, the only child of William Clark Styron, a shipyard engineer with roots so deep in the Old South that his mother had owned two slaves as a child, and Pauline Margaret Abraham Styron, whose ancestors were Pennsylvanians.

Mr. Styron's childhood was close to idyllic. Doted on by his family, an early reader fascinated with words, he made friends easily and happily explored the waterfront and environs of Newport News. In 1940, his father sent him off to Christchurch, a small Episcopal preparatory school in Christchurch, Va., for his last

two years before college. He graduated in 1942. World War II shaped his college career. Enrolling in the Marines' reserve officer training program, he started at Davidson College, a conservative Christian school. But unhappy with the school's strict religious and academic standards, he was transferred to Duke University by the Marines in June 1943.

Active duty followed in October 1944, and after nearly a year of hard training, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in late July 1945 and assigned to participate in the invasion of Japan. A month later, the atomic bomb attacks forced Japan's surrender, and he was discharged in December, relieved yet frustrated by his lack of combat experience. He returned to Duke in the fall, where he renewed his friendship with Prof. William Blackburn, who had become his writing mentor. Graduating in the spring of 1947, he came away disdaining academic criticism and determined to be a novelist. He moved to New York City. After completing *Lie Down in Darkness*, he put in a second, three-month spell, in the Marines in the summer of 1951. When he won the Prix de Rome, which entailed a year's expenses-paid residence at the American Academy in Rome, to begin in October 1952, he spent the preceding summer in Paris.

After having a first hand war experience of the World War II albeit only for a short time, he jumped on to the career of writing novels and stories on the one hand, and criticisms and essays on the other. Styron's early work, including *Lie Down in Darkness*, won him wide recognition as a distinctive voice of the South and an heir to William Faulkner. In subsequent fiction, like *The Confessions of Nat Turner* and *Sophie's Choice*, he transcended his own immediate world and moved across historical and cultural lines. But then his preoccupation of sort remained the decadence as it was in the mid twentieth century America, though the setting of his

novels and stories were earlier; some were purely historical in the nineteenth century, as in the story of *Confessions of Nat Turner*.

William Styron has enjoyed a resurgence of popularity with the publication of *Darkness Visible* (1990), his account of his struggle with near-suicidal depression. His works are known for discussing psychological conflicts within families, religious doubt, existentialism, racial tension, and the role of history in fiction. Often compared with William Faulkner, Styron has emerged as one of the most important figures in contemporary American literature and is best known for his continuation of the Southern gothic tradition. Through original essays, reprints of previously published criticism, and excerpts from reviews, this volume traces the critical reception of Styron's writings over the last 40 years. All of Styron's novels are covered, but the majority of the selections focus on his three most important works: *Lie Down in Darkness*, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, and *Sophie's Choice*. The pieces reflect a variety of critical perspectives, and the introduction overviews significant trends and omissions in Styron criticism. A bibliography lists Styron's writings, along with critical studies of his work.

Working slowly and deliberately, Styron evolved a complex narrative voice in the novel, more Southern and garrulous than any he had used before. The voice ranged so widely that Styron was able all at once to answer the critics of "Nat Turner" and to document his extensive reading of Holocaust literature while distancing himself ironically from a youthful, somewhat callow version of himself in the book, a central character who somehow mixes up his revelation of Sophie's tragedy with the comic rite of his own sexual initiation. "I suppose some of us are cursed with a dark view of life," says William Styron. Tragedy has given him almost all his subject matter and melancholia has provided the bookends to his career. Styron's first novel,

Lie Down in Darkness, published in 1951 when the author was 26, centers on the suicide of a young woman in America's Deep South and relates the subsequent damage to those close to her. Almost 40 years later, he revisited the territory and the title when he wrote *Darkness Visible*, about a four-year clinical depression in the mid-1980s, which he refers to as his shutdown and which almost led to his suicide. His best-known work is *Sophie's Choice*, the story of an unhinged Holocaust survivor forced into making a damnable choice between her two children while in Auschwitz, which was recently turned into an opera by Nicholas Maw for the Royal Opera House in London.

Like other novelists born in the 1920s, almost all of whom came under the influence of Hemingway, Styron took warfare as a given subject. He had already written a war book, *The Long March*, a novella published half a century ago. The story turns on the order made to a battalion of marines to undertake a pointless, gruelling 36-mile march from one post to another, while a group of fellow soldiers lies dead, killed in an accidental explosion. The book expresses Styron's dislike of the war time and military experience.

Lie Down in Darkness poses darkish questions as to the meaning and rationality of man. Once supposed to be divine being in mortal guise, who could boast of his divine lineage, man has come to face the meaninglessness of life. The age of gods has passed, and so has the age of heroes, in which man could challenge and befriend the gods. Along with the passage of time, introduction of so-called civilization, man now lives in a truly human era, properly called the age of man. Devoid of any divine touch and deprived of heroic prowess, man today faces the crisis of making sense of his own life. *Lie Down in Darkness* presents essentially a bleak view of life. But is this view the representative view of the age? Or is it merely a

literary expression of the personal stories of depression and alcoholism of the novelist? Does the novel stand as an achievement of the age? Has America, once hailed as the Promised Land, entered the phase of spiritual dissolution and death? Such questions are to be answered before one arrives at a conclusion about the thematic and literary significance of the novel in question.

A brief story line for the appreciation of the novel follows here. *Lie Down in Darkness* represents Post World War II America as analogous to the third stage of Vichian cycle of history. The novel is centered upon a young woman from southern America, her suicide and its repercussions on her family. Since the central action of the novel is suicide, one cannot hope anything divine or heroic in such a work as the novel which attempts to present a society inhabited by individual, haunted by the sense of loss, meaninglessness, and chaos. Styron got international recognition and award early on for a work that commanded critical acclaims and appreciations.

Young Peyton Loftis, daughter of a Virginia family, had committed suicide in New York City. Her body had been barely rescued from Potter's Field, and it had been transported by train to Port Warwick, Virginia. Her father, Milton, and his mistress, Dolly Bonner, arrived in one car to meet the body, and her mother, Helen, and Helen's minister, Carey Carr, arrived in another car.

Only the two cars followed the hearse on the trip to the cemetery on a hot August afternoon. Several incidents of car trouble delayed the trip, and during the trip and the funeral service, the characters took turns remembering all of the events that had led to Peyton's death. Even Peyton's memories were recalled.

Milton, an alcoholic father, remembered incidents from his youth, his wartime marriage to Helen, the birth of Maudie, their older daughter, retarded and crippled, and then the birth of Peyton, perfect and beautiful. Helen, the disturbed mother, also

remembered, but from a different perspective. Helen had devoted all of her attention and love to the deficient Maudie, while Milton had doted on and spoiled Peyton with obsessive love.

They both remembered that Helen had blamed both Milton and Peyton for Maudie's death. Helen, unable to love either Milton or Peyton, had turned to religion and her minister, Carey Carr, and, ultimately, to mental illness. Milton had become an alcoholic, and after rejection by Helen, had begun an affair with Dolly Bonner on the night of Peyton's sixteenth birthday. Peyton lost her innocence shortly thereafter, and she had followed in her father's pattern of alcoholism and sexual promiscuity. At her wedding to Harry, a Jewish New York artist, Milton was very drunk and made sexual advances to Peyton. Peyton moved to New York with Harry but separated from him because of her affairs with other men. She killed herself by leaping off a building in New York City.

After the funeral, Helen and Milton had a violent confrontation at the cemetery, then Milton tried to choke Helen. They left the cemetery separately. The novel concludes with an African American religious revival service.

Milton Loftis is a lawyer in Port Warwick, Virginia, whose career is stagnant and whose family life is miserable. He is constantly put down by his wife, Helen, who assumes moral superiority and who maintains financial control of the family by means of a substantial inheritance. Milton turns to alcohol and eventually to Dolly Bonner to find solace. He virtually ignores his eldest daughter, Maudie, but is lovingly obsessed with Peyton and constantly tries to serve as mediator between her and Helen.

Although Milton behaves miserably when Maudie is critically ill, wandering drunk through Charlottesville while she is in surgery, Maudie's death brings a temporary reconciliation with Helen. Events at Peyton's wedding, however, bring not

only another split with Helen but also conflict with Peyton, who screams at him to stop smothering her. Milton's subsequent contacts with Peyton are through letters, and he is devastated when he receives word of her death. Helen rejects his attempts at reconciliation and even refuses to go in the same car with him to Peyton's funeral. At the novel's end, with Peyton reburied in Port Warwick, Milton is ready to leave Dolly but has no sense of purpose or direction.

Helen Peyton Loftis, Milton's wife, is so fond of their handicapped eldest daughter, Maudie, but bitterly resents Peyton the hold that she has over Milton. The mother is thus jealous of the intimacy between the father and the daughter. She constantly rejects Peyton's attempts to win her love. Following Maudie's death, Helen irrationally blames Peyton for it. She reconciles with Milton, however. After Peyton announces her desire to return home for her wedding, Helen throws herself into plans for it. At the wedding, she becomes angry and once again rejects Peyton. Despite counseling from Carey Carr, Helen is unable to find meaning in her life or to feel love. Following Peyton's death, she rejects Milton's attempt at reconciliation and steels herself to face life along.

Maudie Loftis, the physically handicapped and mentally retarded daughter of Helen and Milton becomes the sole object of her mother's affection. The night before leaving for college, Peyton attempts to assist Maudie but allows her to fall. Although Maudie receives only a slight bruise and is undisturbed by the fall, Helen viciously attacks Peyton. Helen later suggests that the fall contributed to Maudie's death.

Dolly Bonner, Milton's mistress, is devastated when Milton returns to Helen after Maudie's death. She readily accepts him back after the Loftises fight at Peyton's wedding. Eagerly anticipating Milton's impending divorce, Dolly is crushed when she realizes, at Peyton's funeral, that she is losing Milton again, probably permanently.

Carey Carr is the Episcopal rector at Helen's church to whom Helen turns in her despair. Strongly attracted to Helen, Carey listens and seeks to comfort her but is unable to offer any real help. His own belief in God is so uncertain that he can only mildly protest when Helen angrily asserts that God does not exist.

Harry Miller is a Jewish artist whom Peyton meets in New York and marries. He loves Peyton and attempts to help her but is so tormented by her unfaithfulness and her unfounded attacks on him that he leaves her. When Harry learns of Peyton's death, he has her body exhumed from Potter's Field and shipped to Port Warwick for reburial.

The title of William Styron's novel *Lie down in Darkness* comes from Sir Thomas Browne's *Urn Burial*, published in 1658 which contains the line "it cannot be long before we lie down in darkness and have our light in ashes". The overall theme is similar to and most often compared to William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* (1930) in both theme and technique. The last section, Peyton's soliloquy, is most often compared to Molly Bloom's soliloquy in James Joyce's final section of *Ulysses* (1922). But Styron's is distinct voice, whatever the influence of the predecessor's on him.

The novel is credited as a reflection of the psychological and social complication of the age by some critics. George Perkins, in *Reader's Encyclopaedia of American Literature*, writes about Styron's literature including the novel as a musing upon the complications of the age. To quote him:

Styron reveals in his powerful fictions that shock of recognition and complicity in which sex, death, language, self-exploitation, slavery and Nazism are all inextricably bound up, not resulting in absolute paralysis but revealing the psyche and social depths of such forces. His

bravely dark vision exposes the fact that we are all simultaneously victims and accomplices as we speak to, pursue, and use one another.

(981)

Thus, the novel has a darkish view of life. That was befitting the society grappling with a crumbling order.

As Jeanne R. Nostrandt writes in his essay “William Styron’s *Lie Down in Darkness: A Parable*”, the society of his time lacked personal responsibility, community consciousness and religious dedication. This led to the spiritual and moral decay of the age. The death of the twenty two year old Peyton is an allegory of the degenerate and decayed modern age. By way of citing him:

Peyton’s funeral procession is a dark comedy in itself. The characters trailing behind the coffin, as it winds its way from the train station—through the town, down the dirty rutted roads, halted often by the breakdown of the hearse and roaming, trance-like pilgrims drawn to the Daddy Faith evangelical gathering—perform in their most allegorical roles. Even in the rituals of death and burial, Peyton becomes a victim. Perhaps Styron avoids using her as a living character simply because he does not know her, that is, he did not really know the young girl who was her model, never having even held her hand . . . (60)

Thus, Nostrandt, sees in the novel the loss of moral sense and spirituality in the individuals as the root cause of the degeneration of the society. Family sense and a renewed spirituality—beliefs in God’s sovereign existence and relation with man – these are what make a life meaningful. In the absence of this regenerative faith in love and divinity, the twentieth century humanity suffers from debilities of every sort.

Lewis P. Simpson traces the fact of the impact of the socio-economic ups and downs in the novels of mid-twentieth century America, not least of Styron's. As he argues in the essay "Southern Fiction":

[. . .] the consciousness of history and self in the southern novelists is fundamental [. . .] . They began to know history as the shaping pressures exerted by adventitious commercial imperatives. [. . .] The common theme of the American novel, southern or not, became a quest to define a vision of the self's being in a post humanist, a post-Christian society; in short, in a postmodern world. (154-55)

Thus, as Simpson also notes, the disintegration of traditional socio-familial and religious values and the lack of a new system that would sustain the society led to the crisis of existence and meaning in life. The young woman who commits suicide in the novel is symptomatic of the malaise eroding the American society in the twentieth century.

This thesis explicates the novel as the documentation of the decadent human condition as America underwent consequent to the devastating World War II. For Styron, success came early. He was 26 when *Lie Down in Darkness*, his first novel, was published in 1951. It was a brooding, lyrical meditation on a young Southern girl's suicide, as viewed during her funeral by members of her family and their friends. In the narrative, language plays as important a role as characterization, and the debt to Faulkner in general and *The Sound and the Fury* in particular was obvious. A majority of reviewers praised the novel for its power and melodiousness — although a few complained of its morbidity and its characters' lack of moral stature — and the book established Styron as a writer to be read and watched.

This thesis studies the novel with help of the three-fold division of human history as propounded by the eighteenth century thinker Giambattista Vico in his book *The New Science*. In explaining Vico's theory, the concept of allegory is also briefly explained, with the proposition in mind that the novel at hand uses the device of allegory to make the point that human civilization is weakening due to the loss of ideals and virtues. In the meantime, noting the interrelationship between fact and fiction, story and history, the historical situatedness or context of the novel is also presented in a New Historical light.

This thesis has taken interest in finding, in *Lie Down in Darkness*, the references and metaphors of depression, death, degeneration etc. which are so symptomatic, in general, of the Age of Men in the framework of the Vichian cycle on the one hand and on the other of the Post World War II generation in particular. Inspection of Styron's metaphors suggested that he characterized depression and suicide as having a directionality that is down, in and away, and as a sequential process of suffering and adversity that is a form of malevolence and annihilation. In contrast, recovery is up, out, and through and characterized as a sequential process of return to a life of goodness and light. Styron's metaphor system is also externally valid, in the sense that it reflects a number of interlocking cultural programs, including patterns of everyday thought, historical stereotypes of mental disorder, Western conceptions of emotion and mental illness, and literary traditions of the description of depression. The thesis discusses the implications of our findings for public education about depression and for theories about the relationship between social cognition and social knowledge. As the humanity moves ahead in socio-political development, it essentially degenerates in moral and spiritual innocence. The achievement in the capacity to deep feelings is not matched by the capacity to maintain constancy and

honesty. It is a typical characteristic of the age of man that the essentially weak personality cannot face the rugged realities of life, and takes recourse to death. This is the suggestion made by the title of the novel: one lies down in darkness, devoid of life and hope and light. Since life had no meaning, in the human scheme of things, death has no meaning either.

This thesis is divided in four main chapters. The first chapter presents biographical information and a historical context in which the novel under study was produced. It also contains some critics' reviews and readings of the novel. The second chapter discusses the cyclical conception of history as propounded by the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico in his book *The New Science*. Specially, his theory of the ages in history, and particularly of the Age of Man is discussed in some detail to use the insight in interpreting the novel. The third chapter is dedicated to explicating the textual excerpts in light of the insights developed in the second chapter. The textual exegetics shows that the novel is a typical representative work depicting the morally decadent, religiously unfaithful and socially disintegrated humanity in post world war period. The fourth and concluding chapter sums up the propositions of the thesis, its support from within the novel and thus the justifiability of the hypothesis.

II. Vico, Historical Glance and the Novel

2.1 Vichian Notion of Cyclical History

Vico Published his landmark text on history, philosophy and mythology combined and, as it was the spirit of the age, the Age of Reason wherein science was so much revered and valorized, entitled it as *The New Science* (1725). In it he discusses his idea of the *ricorsi*, or historical cycle.

This New Science is a metaphysic, a study of the common nature of nations in the light of divine providence, discovers the origins of divine and human institutions among the gentile nations, and thereby establishes a system of the natural law of the gentiles, which proceeds with the greatest equality and constancy through the three ages which the Egyptians handed down to us as the three periods through which the world has passed up to their time. These are: the Age of the Gods, in which the gentiles believed they lived under divine governments, and everything was commanded them by auspices and oracles, which are the oldest institutions in profane history; the Age of the Heroes, in which they reigned everywhere in aristocratic commonwealths, on account of a certain superiority of nature which they held themselves to have over the plebs: the Age of Men, in which all men recognized themselves as equal in human nature, and therefore there were established first the popular commonwealths and then the monarchies, both of which are forms of human government.

Vico's conception of the ideal eternal history— the universal pattern of the histories of all the nations— signifies a passage from the traditional metaphysical conception of history, as the history of beings, to a metaphysic or science of the certain reflects or embodies the common nature of nations. This common nature of nations, moreover, is seen in the light of divine providence. Vico's metaphysics,

therefore, does not attempt to conceptualize universal, unchanging truth as an abstraction existing outside human praxis, but contemplates the invisible substance of historicity in and through praxis. Vico's science is, at one and the same time, a science of concrete human praxis, since it is a science of the certain, and a science of divine providence, since it is a science of the true.

In his Introduction to *The New Science* Vico says that the first principal aspect of this science is that it is a science of divine providence. Vico's divine providence is his name for the Being of the whole of human becoming. Vico's science does not locate this whole as an absolute hovering somewhere outside of the certainties of historicity, but examines the conduct of divine providence as it shows itself in and through historicity. This providential order is neither the result of Epicurean chance or Stoic fate. Nor is it the result of sheer human making. Although appearing in human praxis, providence is something that remains exterior to man, other than man, working, for the most part, contrary to human intentions. History is not created or produced by men, but occurs as a result of man's fantastic and archaic response to that which is exterior to man, to that which surpasses and ultimately uses man's desires to design the course and recourse of human historicity. Looked this way, the modern wars are not necessarily the results of the intended actions of humanity, but they happen to act somehow to instigate the circumstances conducive to wars.

Reflecting on remnants of Egyptian antiquity as his point of departure, Vico sums up what he calls 'the ideal eternal history' on the model chiefly of pagan nations among the early gentiles, most specifically on the socio-cultural history of ancient Greece. Initially, during a pre-historical period in which people wandered like beasts across mountaintop, barbarism reigned until thunderclaps drove them into caves, and, at once terrified and awed, they defined the thunder and humbled themselves before

it. In time the fear of divinity chastened and redirected the fierceness of men seeking to perpetuate sexual pleasure with unruly and promiscuous women, and thereby sanctified a necessity, namely marriage, which transformed the caves of men and women in a natural state into the first human households.

Along analogous lines Vico theorizes that extended family soon arose, commonwealths first and then cities with patriarchal sovereignty. According to Vico, nations and families alike grow out of religion, matrimony, and burial rites constitute the basic institutions of all civilizations. As he explains in Book IV, titled 'The Course [or Cycle] the Nations Run,' the institutions also subsume the overall developmental progress of history, which Vico argues, unfolds in three consecutive and recurring cultural stages the Age of Gods, the Age of Heroes, and the Age of Men. Together the three bigger form a unitary cycle, or corso, each age demonstrating a peculiar type of human nature, customs, government, language, law, jurisprudence and dissolution. The flux between maturity in the heroic age and decadence in the human age is a creative period leading to dissolution even as civilizations peak, and 'new barbarism' takes hold, a transitory period, a ricorso or a reflux during which the cycle swings back to a pre-evolutionary primitive phase, and out of the ruins nations, 'like the phoenix,....rise again' (Vico 1108), only to repeat the identical historical pattern. The following schema describes the characteristics of the three ages.

As Vico writes in the concluding section of *The New Science* that human society cannot stand for a moment without the order of a family, providence led the family fathers naturally to unite themselves with their kindred in orders against their clients. To pacify the latter, they conceded to them, in the world's first agrarian law, the monetary ownership of the fields, retaining for themselves the optimum or sovereign family ownership:

Thus the first cities arose upon reigning orders of nobles. And as the natural order declined which had been based, in accordance with the then state of nature, on superiority of kind, sex, age and virtue, providence called the civil order into being along with the cities. [. . .] In virtue of a heroism, the nobles should rule over the plebeians who did not contract marriage with such solemnities, and now that divine rules had ceased under which the families had been governed by divine auspices and the heroes had to rule in virtue of the form of the heroic governments themselves, that the principal basis of these commonwealths should be religion safeguarded within the heroic orders, and that through this religion all civil laws and rights should belong to the heroes alone. (379)

But since nobility had now become a gift of fortune, providence caused to arise among the nobles the order of the family fathers themselves, as being naturally more worthy because of age. And among the fathers it caused the most spirited and robust to arise as kings whose duty it should be to lead the others and gird them in orders to resist and overawe the rebellious clients. But with the passage of the years and the far greater development of human minds, the plebs of the peoples finally became suspicious of the pretensions of such heroism and understood themselves to be of equal human nature with the nobles, and therefore insisted that they too should be taken into the civil orders of the cities. Since in due time the peoples were to become sovereign, providence permitted a long antecedent struggle of plebs with nobility over piety and religion in the heroic contests for the extension of the auspices by the nobles to the plebeians, with a view to securing thereby the extension of all public and private rights regarded as dependent on the auspices.

Thus the very care for piety and attachment to religion brought the people to civil sovereignty. In this respect the Roman people went beyond all others in the world, and for that reason it became the master people of the world. In this way, as the natural order merged more and more with the civil orders, the popular commonwealths were born. In these everything had to be reduced to lot or balance, and providence therefore, in order that neither chance nor fate should rule, ordained that the census should be the measure of fitness for office. Thereby the industrious and not the lazy, the frugal and not the prodigal, the provident and not the idle, the magnanimous and not the faint-hearted in a word, the rich with some virtue or semblance thereof, and not the poor with their many shameless vices were considered the best for governing. In such commonwealths the entire peoples, who have in common the desire for justice, command laws that are just because they are good for all. Such a law Aristotle divinely defines as will without passions, which would be the will of a hero who has command of his passions, these commonwealths gave birth to philosophy. By their very form they inspired it to fashion the hero, and for that purpose to interest itself in truth. All this was ordained by providence to the end that, since virtuous actions were no longer prompted by religious sentiments as formerly, philosophy should make the virtues understood in their idea, and by dint of reflection thereon, if men were without virtue they should at least be ashamed of their vices. Only so can peoples prone to ill-doing be held to their duty. And from the philosophies providence permitted eloquence to arise and, from the very form of these popular commonwealths in which good laws are commanded, to become impassioned for justice, and from these ideas of virtue to inflame the peoples to command good laws. Such eloquence, we resolutely affirm, flourished in Rome in the time of Scipio Africanus, when civil wisdom and military valor, which happily united in establishing

at Rome on the ruins of Carthage the empire of the world, must necessarily have brought in their train a robust and most prudent eloquence.

Vico believes that the ultimate determining instance of socio- cultural change is language. Metaphorical transformations are indicative of the consciousness through which societies and nations pass as they evolve.

Thus the Age of Gods exists only by implication in *Lie Down in Darkness*, in native American place names evoking Virginia's unspoiled, pre-colonial wilderness, and in the imaginative logic of the novel's epilogue, which associates the felt experience of blacks during their baptismal ceremonies on the Tidewater with the primitive consciousness of a theocratic society and which looks backward as well as forward via Vico's ricorso.

Corresponding to the germinal period of the Age of Heroes, references in *Lie Down in Darkness* to Pocahontas and Captain Jhon Smith and especially the Byrds of Virginia recall the launching of colonial life by the first English planters. Their piety and gratitude for nature's bounty the reader may surmise in their genetic descendants whose way of life the passage of time has least affected--- descendants inhabiting the Northern Neck of Virginia:

A land of prime pastoral fences, virgin timber, grazing sheep and Anglo-Saxons: these, the last, spoke in slumberous Elizabethan accents, rose at dawn, went to bed at dusk, and maintained, with Calvinist passion, their traditional intolerance of evil...destiny had given them a peaceful and unvanquished land to live in, free of railroads and big-city ways, and the meretricious lures of the flesh, and when they died they died, for the most part, in contentment, shriven of their moderate, parochial sins. They were bounded by two rivers and

the sky,...and the smell of sea filled in harmony with nature and called themselves the last Americans.(Styron 226-27)

The first planters were of course adventurers British subjects who came to the New World with charters granting them proprietorships on the authority of the crown and the divine right of kings. They felt justified in appropriating Indian lands and importing slaves, therefore, and by 1700 the Tidewater elite had already stabilized the structure of plantation life, the core of antebellum culture, on the model of the English manor. The most vivid example of southern colonial aristocracy is William Byrd of Westover, who was born in his father's James River Plantation, and who founded Richmond. Like entirely coincidentally Milton and Dolly Bonner spend one of their out-of town trysts in Westover during Garden Week, the estate is most redolent with the romantic grandeur of the Southern past.

In promoting civil sovereignty on behalf of the crown, colonial America had already acquired features Vico ascribes to heroic government in the schema outlined above---'law of force controlled by religion.' In rebelling against the crown, by virtue of laws grounded in Enlightenment political philosophy and stated in the Declaration of Independence, colonial America may be said to have arrived at the brink of a 'human' or 'democratic' society. The transition to the next age commences, writes Vico, when 'the entire peoples...have in common the desires for justice' and 'command laws that are just because they are good for all' (1101)...when, that is to say, the rule of law supplants the rule of aristocracy. Thus, it was not until the outcome of the Civil War effected the essential difference between heroes and the humanity of ordinary people, of blacks especially but of other servile classes well, that the transition to the Age of Men was effected in the nation as a whole.

Human beings are to recognize their inherent worth as well as sinfulness simultaneously. They are the creation of god in His own image, yet they are all depraved. This recognition is a symptom of wisdom, especially in the light of the modern humanity which has seen the vicious series of wars and crimes, and yet aspired for noble virtues of peace, universal brotherhood and tolerance on many fronts.

But if the peoples are rotting in that ultimate evil disease either of megalomania, of superiority conceit, or of discrimination easily forgetting that all are like the worm or dust in the eyes of God. For such peoples, like so many beasts, have fallen into the custom of each man thinking only of his own private interests and have reached the extreme of delicacy, or better of pride, in which like wild animals they bristle and lash out at the slightest displeasure. Thus no matter how great the throng and press of their bodies, they live like wild beasts in a deep solitude of spirit and will, scarcely any two being able to agree since each follows his own pleasure or caprice. By reason of all this, providence decrees that, through obstinate factions and desperate civil wars, they shall turn their cities into forests and the forests into dens and lairs of men. In this way, through long centuries of barbarism, rust will consume the misbegotten subtleties of malicious wits that have turned them into beasts made more inhuman by the barbarism of reflection than the first men had been made by the barbarism of sense. The occurrence of two World Wars within thirty years only prove the depravity in human heart that longs more for death and violence than for life and peace. Hence peoples who have reached this point of premeditated malice, when they receive this last remedy of providence and are thereby stunned and brutalized, are sensible no longer of comforts, delicacies, pleasures, and pomp, but only of the sheer necessities of life. And the few survivors in the midst of an abundance of the things

necessary for life naturally become sociable and, returning to the primitive simplicity of the first world of peoples, are again religious, truthful, and faithful. Thus providence brings back among them the piety, faith, and truth which are the natural foundations of justice as well as the graces and beauties of the eternal order of God.

2.2 Reading in Context: The Post-War Era and Literature

The contextual reading of Styron's literature need not exactly match with or fit in the schema of Vico's divisions of ages. The important point is not so much that Styron has accommodated American history to Vichian theory, but that the general progression of Vichian ages readily conduces to the overall thematic design of Styron's plot. Virginia's heart and home rest in the past, in the pastoral order of the Old south, and first of all in the fear of God. As cities arose and the heroic age set in, piety gradually yields to urban morals and mores, and the land beyond the Northern Neck fell to incursions of industrial blight from the North. And now, in 1945, as Virginia is dying, so is America. Structurally, as the funeral procession weaves through Styron's narrative, death pervades the novel, corpse and landscape merge, as in *Finnegan's Wake* by Joyce, and the demise of innocence and an agrarian culture become inextricable from the unsightly pollution of factories and their spiritual correlative, the decadence and affected intellectualism of social forces connecting Port Warwick to New York city.

But as the predominant features of the Vichian ages overlap, crossing chronological boundaries, strains of the heroic persist. 'The law of force controlled by religion,' for example, persists through Helen's progenitors, her grandfather(and army chalpain) and martinet father(Colonel Blood and Jesus Peyton), and in her brother, Colonel Edward Peyton, a Guadalcanal Viteran who believes that might makes right and that militarists make the best political leaders. Helen herself

manifests' punctilious' customs in her preoccupation with proprieties and rectitude. And throughout the state, white Virginians of all classes continue to reverse Jefferson, the aristocratic statesman in the foreground of most of the great political developments in the early history of the Republic, the lawmaker whose judgement and studied sentences exhibit other features of the heroic age... 'religio verborum' and 'reason of the state'. On the other side of Charlottesville sits the university of Virginia, Jefferson's architectural design for the development of the country's spiritual character and testimony of his faith in the capacity of Virginia's youth to lead the way. There, on the University's playing fields, Milton watches his alma mater go down to defeat in football. He also loses his banner a replica of the Confederate flag, the equivalent in Vico's schema of a heroic blazoning 'with which arms are made to speak' (514). The point of Styron's symbolic details is scarcely subtle: if the Age of Heroes lingers nostalgically in the mind of the South, it has also become the fulcrum of time's betrayals. Except for Americans who, like the dying stranger Milton encounters in the hospital, are locked into the cocoon of heroic consciousness, or who, like Milton's mistress's ex-husband, seem emotionally immune to adversity, the legacy of the past has become a shaming burden draining the psychic energy of a self-conscious society that pales in comparison, Milton significantly the single remaining Loftis in a long line of lawyers, had hoped to become a statesman, at the very least 'Commonwealth's attorney' (88), and now, living the Age of Men, he must content himself with bond issues (76).

The dramatic bridge between the heroic age and Milton's withered political career is the verbatim memory of Milton's dead father's counsel surfacing to consciousness sporadically. He remembers his father's saying, typically, that the best defense against wayward beguilements in the road of life is to 'Take... a backward

glance at Monticello' (74). On the one hand, spoken through an Edwardian mustache, reflect a 'finer, tranquil age(14)—the period of Milton's young adulthood, between 1900 and the Great War----and that his admonitions oversimplify the complexity of modern time; on the other hand, defeated by modern times, Milton is inclined to agree with his father that America already enjoyed the golden age in the years after the Civil War

The world political situation also had a tremendous impact on the life of Miller. The depression after war, the anti-communist hunt begun by Senator Joseph McCarthy and the disintegration of American society these all somehow or other are reflected in novel. The entry of the United States into World War II caused vast changes in virtually every aspect of American life. Millions of men and women entered military service and saw parts of the world they would likely never have seen otherwise. The labor demands of war industries caused millions more Americans to move--largely to the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts where most defense plants located. When World War II ended, the United States was in better economic condition than any other country in the world. Even the 300,000 combat deaths suffered by Americans was not so shocking in comparison to any other major belligerent. Building on the economic base left after the war, American society became more affluent in the postwar years than most Americans could have imagined in their wildest dreams before or during the war. Public policy, like the so-called GI Bill of Rights passed in 1944, provided money for veterans to attend college, to purchase homes, and to buy farms. The overall impact of such public policies was almost incalculable, but it certainly aided returning veterans to better themselves and to begin forming families and having children in unprecedented numbers.

Not all Americans participated equally in these expanding life opportunities

and in the growing economic prosperity. The image and reality of overall economic prosperity--and the upward mobility it provided for many white Americans--was not lost on those who had largely been excluded from the full meaning of the American Dream, both before and after the war. As a consequence, such groups as African Americans, Hispano Americans, and American women became more aggressive in trying to win their full freedom and civil rights as guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence and US Constitution during the postwar era.

The postwar world also presented Americans with a number of problems and issues. Flushed with their success against Germany and Japan in 1945, most Americans initially viewed their place in the postwar world with optimism and confidence. But within two years of the end of the war, new challenges and perceived threats had arisen to erode that confidence. By 1948, a new form of international tension had emerged--Cold War--between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its allies. In the next 20 years, the Cold War spawned many tensions between the two superpowers abroad and fears of Communist subversion gripped domestic politics at home.

In the twenty years following 1945, there was a broad political consensus concerning the Cold War and anti-Communism. Usually there was bipartisan support for most US foreign policy initiatives. After the United States intervened militarily in Vietnam in the mid-1960s, however, this political consensus began to break down. By 1968, strident debate among American about the Vietnam War signified that the Cold War consensus had shattered, perhaps beyond repair.

At such times, even the theme and subject matters for literature seem to have degenerated to loss, death, incest and debauchery, not least drunkenness which characterizes the character of Milton Loftis in the novel under study. A better or

brighter outlook of life was not very conforming to the environs of the day then. So, it should come as no surprise that Styron attempted a darkish vision of life and age in his first novel, a landmark in modern American literature.

III. Age of Man: Postmodern Human Condition in *Lie Down in Darkness*

3.1 Images of Death and Devastation

The very casting of the novel, so to speak in the filmy parlance, presents a scene of death. The plot moves forward, actually backward in temporality—it is a flashback technique, not always stream of consciousness. One hot day in August 1945, immediately after the Second World War, a train carrying Peyton Loftis's body arrives in the town of Port Warwick. The moments of the procession are rendered intolerably painful to the attendants, especially to Milton Loftis, who had loved his daughter so fondly. They feel the omnipresent heat, in Eliotic terms it is like the objective correlative: the heat, the stinking marsh and rotting fish, and the noise from the shipyard. On this march to the cemetery does the novel begin, with Milton remembering the past, remembering Peyton, the narration shifts to other settings and events. A whole family life story is recapitulated, with moments of pains and pleasure, sorrows and joys, repentance and forgiveness, and all the ingredients of life that make human life tolerable and pleasant to live though not without not infrequent bittersweet moments. This is just a glimpse of the funeral procession:

The other three walked silently to the shadow beneath the station shed where another group of people had already gathered for the train. . . . Across from the dock, and separated from it by twenty yards or so of greasy water, a freighter lay tethered to its pier [...] From the pier came the rattle and hum of an electric crane, a scorched, galvanic smell of burned metal. A workman's voice from the hold, faint and sepulchral like the echo from a cave, 'bring her over' and a thick fog of dust started to drift from the ship, floating downward in an undulating

cloud settled gently on the dock beneath the shed and began to tinge everything with a fine sediment, faintly gritty to the touch. . . . (15)

In the Age of gods, the concept of sorrow and separation was there of course, but the unwanted death, untimely death was thing out of imagination. In the Age of Heroes, death had meaning, chivalric death experienced for love, patriotism and noble cause would have edifying effect regarding the fame of the person who suffered death. Life was meaningful in a way that was less than godly but aspired to be one, and there was the sense of the encroaching death. So man used to make sense of life by chivalry, valor, brinkmanship and the like. But in the modern times death has become too handy, and meaningless; presumably because life too has become too easy and meaningless. Otherwise it is unthinkable that a newly married teenager should go so far as to commit suicide in a vein that is so disgusting, humiliating and painful.

In this context, it is relevant to refer to how Vico views history. Vico describes the ideal eternal history most colorfully when he gives this axiom: “Men first felt necessity, then look for utility, next attend to comfort, still later amuse themselves with pleasure, thence grow dissolute in luxury, and finally go mad and waste their substance (241).” History is presented clearly as a circular motion in which nations rise and fall. Nations eternally course and recourse through this cycle passing through these eras over and over again. In the context of the novel, America is the nation; the America around the World War period, that has come to the final dissolution. The lack of vitality and values has caused the dissolution, so much so that youths like Peyton are led to commit ignominious suicide. The rise of a prosperous, materialistically developed society is no guarantee that it would be a fulfilling society for its members. Rather, the social-economic development is the last stage of positive

development. After gaining a certain height of development, a society starts deteriorating. America was at such a juncture around the Second World War.

The novel is replete with pathetic scenes which are created in the aftermath of the death of the daughters of the Loftis family. Maudie, the handicapped elder daughter has been dead for some years. Milton and Helen have just been able to recuperate from the tragedy. Life has just started to run normally; but then the blow of tragedy falls upon them. Their only hope, the younger daughter to commits suicide. It is a very sad scene that the loving father who is so fond of his daughter has to relate the death of their younger daughter to the mother. The mother may be or likely may not be able to feel deepest sorrow of the loss of her daughter; they had too inimical quarrel in life to let them feel deeply for each other.

He stood at the door for a moment, his face flushed, bewildered, saying nothing; then he blurted, Helen, Peyton killed herself,' and entered. She made no reply, the sudden shock striking somewhere inside her chest like an electric bolt, flickering at her finger tips, numbing her cheeks, but receding swiftly as she remembered, thought so, well--- receding even as swiftly as the storm which, passing, drifted with remote grumbling over the ocean, while unseen clouds cast into the garden a pink flushed twilight, swiftly fading/ in the kitchen, amid the rattle of pots and pans, Ella Swan was singing a tune. About Jesus. (28)

The memory of Lord Jesus is a fakery on the part of Helen to cover up her guilt of conscience. She is neither sincerely a believer nor can give up the appearance of being pious. She most possibly is not as touched by the accident as a normal mother would be. Therefore the occurrence of the serene and calm images of other mundane items in

her mind; she is not distraught by the death of her daughter. The capacity to feel deeply and empathize with one's family too is deteriorated.

The last but not the least of the fatal quarrel had occurred at the night of Peyton's wedding, when Helen protested and chided Peyton for her rude pushing and insulting of her father. But Peyton only too well understood it was all Helen's psychic problem; the mother was getting mad not at the thought of the father being rudely handled but because she would thereafter not have Peyton at her disposal to gnaw and nag at her. Peyton had already been too far from her grasp as an individual, and now she was married to certain amiable Jew youth named Harry. Peyton tells this to her face, and Helen cannot help infuriating her daughter by belittling the boy as an act of ultimate revenge. Peyton gets fiery and scratches Helen's cheek with her nails, snapping a nail in this swift catlike assault. Milton was there eavesdropping, not having the courage to intervene and stop the finale from occurring; but after that there was no question of reconciliation. He himself lost in dignity in Peyton's eyes as one incapable of bold decision to have divorce from the mad woman.

That Helen is a case of dementia, a mental disorder, is attested to by the following observation too. At the time of such bereavement she is calculative and capable of reasoning about tiny matters.

She closed her eyes again, thinking: I must somehow get that fan fixed, and slowly thinking: Carey Carr is coming at noon. I must be ready, not moving or stirring because of the weariness that had emptied her like a vessel. I have always been so sick. All my life I have yearned for sleep. Remote and apart from the silence in the house she was aware of faint noises outside: half- heard, half remembered sounds flicked like

shapes through her mind... a gull's cry, a car on the road, water sucking at the shore. (30-31)

Even the physical, geographical setting is suggestive of a downward move in the life of the Loftis. Though they inhabit no less a city than Charlottesville, a city in central Virginia that was the birthplace of Thomas Jefferson and the home of the University of Virginia, they present a bleak view of life. Milton has graduated from the University of Virginia, and Peyton dates a young man who attends the university. In addition, Maudie is treated at the University of Virginia medical center, so the memories of the characters return them to Charlottesville, where Milton drinks to excess, attends a football game, and carries a Confederate flag. On the same weekend, Peyton drinks excessively at a fraternity party, and Maudie receives treatment at the university's shoddy medical center. After the football game, Milton become so drunk that he finds himself lost in an African American neighborhood, where the Virginia of Jefferson stands in sharp contrast with the Virginia of the twentieth century. This contrast emphasizes how far these characters have fallen.

The Loftis house is located on the Chesapeake Bay, surrounded by garden, cedars, and a beach. Peyton's mother loves the garden, and Peyton's disabled sister Maudie enjoys the outdoors and the rain. Images of water, of baptisms in the James River, and of rain in the cemetery contrast with the omnipresent heat. Peyton's fondest memories are of walk with her father along the Chesapeake Bay toward Hampton, the only "pure moments" in her troubled life. The novel ends by breaking the heat of Port Warwick with a thunderstorm and with the river baptisms. This contrast of heat and water symbolizes both an ending and a beginning, but in this transformation, there is no promise of a better life; there is only the suggestion that opportunities existed and that these opportunities were just spent.

But the malaise of degeneration is rampant throughout the world, not least America. This is indicated by the fact that even so burgeoning a northern city as New York fails to prevent Peyton from going depressed in life. It is the city in which Peyton spends her last days. In an attempt to escape her dysfunctional family, Peyton marries New York based artist Harry Miller and moves to the city, but in New York, the heat and the family problems continue. Peyton and Harry separate, and Peyton moves in with Anthony, a milkman, and lives in a cockroach-infested apartment. In August, New York is as hot and uninhabitable as Virginia. The irony is that Peyton does not escape her problems by moving; the same heat continues, and this heat symbolizes her suffering. By shifting the setting to New York, Styron is showing that the dysfunctional family is not uniquely southern. The “lost generation” of modern times is a product of an industrialized society, and the hot, oppressive places of this novel ultimately symbolize the inhospitable and dysfunctional environments of modern industrial society.

Peyton Loftis, the youngest daughter of Helen and Milton Loftis is emotionally scarred by her mother’s perpetual scathing and rejection and her father’s smothering love and indulgence. At her sixteenth birthday party, Peyton gets drunk; infuriating her mother and this becomes the last straw in the already straitened relation between the two ladies. Peyton leaves the party and the same evening she spies her father’s infidelity to his wife. She is sort of disenchanted with her parents, and soon leaves home for college. She tries to ameliorate her relation with the parents by writing letters but it only estranges her. She then leaves school for New York City, meets Harry Miller, and they decide to get married. The wedding ceremony becomes the last pretext and occasion for the family to be reunited and the straitened relations smoothed down. But it ends up with the father and daughter getting over-drunk;

Milton making an excess show of love to his daughter and Peyton telling him to stop smothering her, and Helen declaring that she despises Peyton. The couple leave for their honeymoon but their marital relationship is fated to fail, since Peyton suspects Harry' sincerity and starts sleeping with other men. In her frenzied attempt to restore their life she turns to Harry after having blamed him, seeking for forgiveness. Shocked and disillusioned, Harry, leaves her. Peyton writes to her father, sharing her frustrations and despair. Milton writes consoling letter in turn, but to no avail: Peyton kills herself by jumping naked from a building in New York, and her body is unclaimed.

The memory of the past happy times are too fragile to sustain life at present, despite the occasional longing of one to re-live the past. Helen, even Helen is touched by the memory of the happy family they once had, and tries once or twice to reestablish the broken, rugged relationship with her husband and younger daughter Peyton. An excerpt tells how merry the family once was, and Helen cannot but yearn for those happy days of yore.

Now, gently drowsing, she remembers the whistle blowing. It surrounds space, time, sleepy summer evenings many years ago: a remote sad wail involving sleep and memory and some-how love. They'd flight on summer nights because it was hot and Maudie cried and the icebox made a dripping noise, and because the whistle blew. But they loved each other, things that happened long ago: a wild, lost wail, like the voice of love, passing through the darkened room and softly wailing, passing out of the sphere of sound itself and hearing. 'Oh, they were the days. And remember how Peyton... Oh—'halting, his face startled and distressed, as if he had his hand in fire and only

then had felt the pain. His lips trembled. He's going to cry, she said to herself: He's going to cry.

Milton certainly is not a man who does not or cannot love his family. He dotes on his family. Only Helen is incapable of keeping up appearances in the face of the normalcy of life. Her need to gnaw at her husband and the easily escaping daughter make her bitter even with here life, and as a recourse to peace she turns to religion, church and Carey Carr. But her religiosity is just a shallow one. At times of real need of peace and sustenance she cannot rely on the source of light, life and Prince of peace. She discards her belief on God when Maudie dies. This attitude of distrust on the providence is the real cause behind the moral laxity and degeneration of modern humanity.

3.2 Moral and Religious Decay in the Post War Era

The novel begins with the funeral procession of Peyton in a hot August day. The tragic and shameful end she embraces is too shocking a shock for the father that he keeps on reminiscing the past related to her in a medley fashion. Sometimes he recollects the joyous moments, at times the sober ones. The mood is, despite that all, an overwhelmingly restless and traumatic one. Here is an excerpt that provides an insight into as to how Peyton suffers from the tragic death of his much beloved younger daughter:

Just the same, he knew he was too old, too weary for paradoxes, that he couldn't evade immediacy, and that the train would come after all, bringing with it final proof of fate and circumstances—words which all his life he had never quite understood, begin an Episcopalian, nominally, at least, and not inclined by conscience to worry long over abstractions. It would come, bearing with it, too, evidence of all his

errors and of all his love ---because he loved his daughter more than anything--- and the morning, silent, invisible within a coffin--- filled him with horror. The train, he thought, is now on the outskirts of town and passing with a terrible rumbling noise over the least creek past the nigger shacks on the banks. (16)

The extramarital relationship between Milton and Dolly is an instance of the hypocrisy and dissatisfaction in the conjugal life of the modern American people. It sure is a symptom of the degeneration of familial values, and fidelity. What is more, the novel even alludes to the possibility of case of incestuous relations, as it transpires from the intimacy between the father and daughter. Scholars have taken interest in exploring this issue by reviewing the earlier drafts of the novel which more clearly referred to this aspect.

Styron had originally intended to explicitly include allusions to the incestuous relationship between the father and daughter in the Loftis family. The theme is most prominent in William Faulkner's literary tradition of queer theme, such as incest. Within psychoanalysis a most sustained attention to case studies of father daughter relationship emerged in the fifties. None of the post-war authors explained why they chose the study of father-daughter relationship as their subject matter in one form or other. Though Sigmund Freud speculated in the founding of father-daughter incest in the primitive society in his seminal work *Incest and Taboos* (1913), the actual practice of incest between father-daughter remained moot in psychoanalytic studies till later.

The first typescript which followed a Prospectus sent by Styron to his agent affirms even more clearly than the published version of *Lie Down in Darkness* the young writer's debt to Faulkner. In an article "'A New Father, a New Home': Styron, Faulkner, and Southern Revisionism", Christopher Metress demonstrated the

similarities between Styron's first novel and *The Sound and the Fury*, correctly noting that *Lie Down in Darkness* represents the young author's attempt to revise his precursor's masterpiece. One example of that similarity is Styron's use of the character Maudie, the retarded sister of the novel's protagonist, as a substitute for Faulkner's Benjy. Typescript I also contains an important character, Marcus Bonner, who did not survive Styron's revisions. Only the doubtful intimacy between the father and daughter is preserved, albeit in a suppressed vein, in the revision. Clearly, Styron's decision to suppress this group of seedy relationships was also a decision to suppress the incest theme and, as such, may be another effort to cast aside or at least play down Faulkner's influence. But Styron did not discard the theme entirely. Here is West's assessment: "One suspects that Peyton had told Marcus of some kind of incestuous relationship between herself and her father--whether sexually consummated or not, one cannot tell from the surviving chapters" (xiv). But one can tell from the surviving chapters that Milton does have powerful sexual desires for Peyton, desires that he can hardly suppress, significantly enough, at Peyton's wedding. In an essay *The Critical Response to William Styron*, Professor Jeffrey Berman has brilliantly analyzed Milton's emerging awareness at the wedding of his unspeakable desires for Peyton. We consider, for example, Milton's thoughts in *Lie Down in Darkness* when he sees Peyton in her wedding dress:

. . . his eyelids slid open, he saw Peyton, those solid curved hips trembling ever so faintly; he thought desperately, hopelessly, of something he could not admit to himself, but did: of now being above--most animal and horrid, but loving--someone young and dear that he had loved ever since he was child enough to love the face of woman and the flesh, too. Yes, dear God, he thought (and thought dear God,

what am I thinking?) the flesh, too, the wet hot flesh, straining like a beautiful, bloody savage. (258)

Earlier the incident exactly referred to by the analyst as to how Oedipal Complex would germinate in the young female children is noted in the novel. Infantile though it may be considered, this is nonetheless a revealing case in light of the psychoanalytic theories developed around the mid twentieth century.

and she looked up from the pool where tropical goldfish swam restlessly beneath green interlaced mountain ferns, looked up startled and then amused at Peyton who, fleeing out of the distant on the sunlight hill, then floated down the bright mossy slope with abandoned, shrill cries of fear and delight--- ‘The bees, Daddy, the bees/’ Why the dear, she thought, she arose, her arms outstretched--- Why, my dearest baby--- but Milton was running from his chair, intercepting her, tossing Peyton high in the air as the prim skirt blossomed like a gaudy flower against the sky. And so, nuzzling his face against her neck, he bore her towards the porch, both of them giggling, both of them buzzing like bees. (32)

Other passages from the published novel reflect Peyton's awareness of some contact with her father that she would like to screen out of consciousness. Surely, then, Styron decided in the late 1940s to embed the incest theme, a choice which could reflect his uneasiness with the subject or, even more likely, his judgment that the theme would be most powerfully rendered if handled subtly.

A brief peep into the American society between the forties and fifties tell some that it was a decade of father-daughter intimacy, with the fathers helping the daughters in their sexual maturity. Celebrated as new consumers and condemned for

their growing delinquencies, teenage girls emerged as one of the most visible segments of American society during and after World War II. Contrary to the generally accepted view that teenagers grew more alienated from adults during this period, Rachel Devlin argues in a provoking text *Relative Intimacy: Fathers, Adolescent Daughters, and Postwar American Culture* (2005), the postwar culture fostered a father-daughter relationship characterized by new forms of psychological intimacy and tinged with eroticism. According to Devlin, psychiatric professionals turned to the Oedipus complex during World War II to explain girls' delinquencies and antisocial acts. Fathers were encouraged to become actively involved in the clothing choices and makeup practices of their teenage daughters, thus domesticating and keeping under paternal authority their sexual maturation. In Broadway plays, girls' and women's magazines, and works of literature, fathers often appeared as governing figures in their daughters' sexual coming-of-age. It became the common sense of the era that adolescent girls were fundamentally motivated by their Oedipal needs, dependent upon paternal sexual approval, and interested in their fathers' romantic lives. As Devlin demonstrates, the pervasiveness of depictions of father-adolescent daughter eroticism on all levels of culture raises questions about the extent of girls' independence in modern American society and the character of fatherhood during America's fabled embrace of domesticity in the 1940s and 1950s.

The second typescript had something more explicit about the father daughter relationship but Styron eventually omitted it. Typescript III is described as a continuation of the second beginning. We can see in this draft that the young author was hitting his stride; much of the material from this draft remains in the published novel that we have today. Styron also seemed to be honing his comic edge in this draft, incorporating into it an absurd account of Dolly Bonner's early love life. Since

these typescripts take us only through the published novel's first forty pages or so, they offer limited insight into the novel's progress. It is apparent, however, that this part of the novel represented Styron's greatest challenge; they took two years to write, roughly the same amount of time required to complete the rest of *Lie Down in Darkness*.

Psychoanalytic readers, on the other hand, might wish, with these drafts in hand, to reevaluate Styron's struggles with the novel in light of things we now know about his personal conflicts during the 1940s; these conflicts are evident in the autobiographical musings of *Sophie's Choice* and in Styron's revealing account of his protracted grief, recorded in the 1990 memoir, *Darkness Visible*. Creation has never come easily or smoothly for this author; that is one reason his total output in a long career is rather small. And, from my perspective, Styron always seems somewhat ambivalent about his creation. An example of that ambivalence appears in handwritten scrawl at the bottom of the final page of Typescript III: "Or am I too far gone? Would like to write a war novel: these people give me the creeps." In the Preface Styron expresses some amusement at the rediscovery of this frustrated sentiment. Ironically, however, Styron's career has advanced more than four decades since that note and the war novel he wanted to write remains unpublished. For whatever reason, Styron cannot resist writing about the "creeps"--if by that we mean people like the Loftises, and his attraction to such people who harbor dark secrets has made his novels a compelling read for any one interested in psychology, world politics, the family and the like.

But for the Vichian schema of history, this stage of complexity in human relationship, the bizarre search of humanity for pleasure in relations and things unnatural, is the acme of the degradation. It is another form of barbarism, barbarism

of intellect. As noted elsewhere, Vico described two types of "barbarism": one is a "barbarism of sense" which is linked to the pre-historical state; the other is a "barbarism of reflection" or of "intellect" which is linked to Vico's third age. This latter, said Vico, turned people into beasts; they had fallen into the custom of each man thinking only of his own private interests and lived like wild beasts in a deep solitude of spirit and will. Such barbarism was brought about by overusing the intellect in human affairs.

It is interesting that Milton's father had from his side at least taught him the strict moral and religious principles of sticking faithful to a single life partner, citing illustratively from the Holy Bible itself from the Book of Proverbs. Milton recalls this all, but to no avail; he has wasted his and family's life. The memory only makes the situation worse, painful. How his father used to exhort him, time and again:

The old man had given him too much ... my son, your mother was a joy out of honor to the blessed memory of her who brought you into life that you will as the Preacher said live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all days of the life of thy vanity which he had given thee under the sun all the days of thy vanity for that is thy portion in this life and in thy labor which thou takest under the sun. My son... (20)

This moralizing and sermonizing by the old man on the son has failed. The preacher of the Bible might have had tremendous influence upon million down the corridor of history, and it has, but it had little effect whatever on Milton Loftis.

Milton is in love with Dolly for over seven years in secret. When they meet sometimes he talks about his daughter Peyton, and this family talks bothers Dolly painfully. She does not want to be called by her fiancée's family, daughter, as his mistress. But the sense of sin is pinching her from inside:

[...] And often when he spoke of her—although she strove to be understanding—she felt an emotion that, try as she might to call it something else, was nothing else but wretched jealousy. To be known as “his mistress” by the children of the man you love is likely to cause worry and fretfulness and may be broodings at night, and Dolly who preferred things to be worked out simply, detested Peyton for her own sense of sin. She had avoided Peyton as well as she could during the past years—it was the only right thing to do—but even from afar she felt that the girl cast forbidding shadows across her tenderly hopeful destiny. *Milton and I*. (79)

Dolly is determined to be Dolly Loftis, with the aspiration of being elected as the “National Committee woman from Virginia” (82). This possibility was remarked casually by Milton on their first out-of town adultery. The moral degradation is the cause of the disintegration of the family. It is strictly against the theological doctrine to indulge in such heinous vice as adultery, but Dolly dreams of gaining recognition from the relationship founded on such an abominable sin. It seems, breaking marriage vows, vows of fidelity and chastity have no meaning. But the secret sense of guilt is there all the same:

A neon sign winks shamelessly; red sinful splashed fill the room. She gets up, pulls the shade, hiding her guilt beneath the darkness. Should I? Should I still? He’s married. Stern Pentecostal watchwords out of the gray November small-town past, making her sweat: forswear adultery and other such iniquities. It passes. She crawls back into bed beside him, strokes his face, exalted, thinking: I don’t care. He needs me (82)

This is a scene in which Milton and Dolly satisfy their lusts, barbaric lusts. This reminds one of Vico has mentioned how people would indulge in the barbarism of sense and intellect in the degenerated Age of Men. As has already been noted, the civil world goes through a course of three ages and their return. In this process, the civil world experiences ups and downs, manifesting many probabilities for change. More noticeably, Vico described two types of "barbarism": one is a "barbarism of sense" which is linked to the pre-historical state; the other is a "barbarism of reflection" or of "intellect" which is linked to Vico's third age. This latter, said Vico, turned people into beasts; they had "fallen into the custom of each man thinking only of his own private interests" and lived "like wild beasts in a deep solitude of spirit and will." Such barbarism was brought about by overusing the intellect in human affairs. As a result, society and the human spirit were separated from the natural forms of imagination, and common sense was replaced by determinations of the intellect and reflectively devised means of social organization. In Vico's view, the barbarism of the intellect is more inhuman than the barbarism of sense, for the former enables people to reach the point of reflective malice. This barbarism is a reflection of the barbarism of technological life, the life of procedures of action and social organization. It deadens the human conscience to the call for repentance of sins, from adultery to corruption of every sort. People are engulfed the pursuit of sensory pleasure and worldly fame.

This case of dull of conscience is gradually built on Milton, though he had heard from his father sermons against debauchery early on in his life. He is time and again reminded of his father's acrid words on life and human destiny. His father had said once, "most people, whether they know it or not...get on through life by sophomoric fatalism. Only poets and thieves can exercise free will, and most of them

die young” (105). This captures the thought pattern or mentality of a generation that was termed as the lost generation of writers, the generation lost not only their social anchoring and homeland as they were exiled in France, but also lost of their Heavenly Father, since they no longer revered the divine Providence and His plans for their life. How better to sum up the mood of the postwar generation than these words pertaining to Milton’s predicament “what had happened had happened and what might happen would happen and so he took a drink and let his knees rest against Dolly’s safe in the all-inclusive logic of determinism” (105)?

Story about the relation between the two has become so notorious and public that Milton is worried not so much about Helen getting offended or angry at him as about keeping up his general appearance of respectability. He does not want, for all his drunkenness, to be burdened with the qualm of conscience regarding the public knowledge of the affair. Helen finally, determines to face Dolly and talk business regarding it. She thinks Dolly can never deny owning up to the affair; but she also is flexible enough to forget and forgive what has passed as the past. So when she meets Dolly, she is surprised and infuriated to hear from the woman that she had no affair with Milton. The rage and tumult Helen feels at this point is noteworthy, when the culprit acts surprised by the accusation of the crime. But more than the personal tussle of the two, this excerpt is symptomatic of the social and moral decay that America underwent in the post war era.

‘What do you mean’—Helen hadn’t foreseen this: the fury—‘what on earth do you mean? What do you mean—I don’t know what I’m talkinmg about? I’ll tell you what I’m talking about very well. You know exactly. For six years I’ve known about you and Milton. Six years. That’s what. Watching you make a fool of him! Break up my

family, that's what. And you don't know what I'm talking about! As God is my witness—' how disordered she had become and how quickly her sure determination had gone astray. (149)

Milton's wife, Helen, goes to visit their local pastor Reverend Carey Carr who had been in Port Warwick for eighteen years, an assistant rector and the rector of St. Mark's Pentecostal Episcopal Church. Helen pours out her sorrows, hoping to get spiritual guidance and consolation from the man of God. But tragically he himself is not one in intimate walk with God: he had a youthful and abiding passion which was partly "the strange and tragic sorrow he felt at never having been able to attain a complete vision of God, and partly devotion" (116). This is the problem besetting the majority of American families, as Helen complains thus:

"Why can't a man stay with the wife who loves him so? You could see this injustice. It made me sicker and sicker: each night I prayed that this wouldn't go without reproach. But sin. Haven't I sinned, too? God what is sin? Sometimes the logic of this life so defeats me that I think there isn't any reward here on earth, or vindication. Sometimes I think life is just one huge misunderstanding and God must be a really sorry for confusing the issue so". (126)

Helen raises the issue of the depraved nature of humanity in general and of Milton in particular. She invokes questions about the power and design of God to control the world. At hard times, when everything seems out of order, people cast doubt on the very existence and power of the God they used to call upon. It is a sure sign, if not of the end times, of lack of even a little faith in the Providence.

The brief conclusion of the *New Science* largely pays homage to the glory of divine providence. Within it, Vico gives a brief statement about the barbarism of

reflection. Vico claims that history begins in a barbarism of sense and ends in a barbarism of reflection. The barbarism of reflection is a returned barbarism in which the common sense established by religion through poetic wisdom holding a society together has been broken down by individual interests. The interests are spurred because individuals each think according to their own conceptual scheme without concern for the society, which makes it barbaric. These private interests lead into a civil war in which everyone betrays everyone else. This takes humanity back to where it started -- individual giants acting solely on their own individual passions.

This analysis of Vico matches the selfish, irresponsible interests of the people in the novel. There are marital infidelity, familial envy, and distrust. There are moments in which the limits of decency and natural relationship have been crossed. And there are instances in which what is morally acceptable has been cast down to indulge in fornication. The barbarism of senses is sometimes displayed without the faintest veneer of modesty.

Helen is furious at her husband Milton, for he has been too ingratiating towards their younger daughter Peyton. Peyton is also fond of her dad, so much so that Helen secretly envies the intimacy of the two, and aligns herself with the elder daughter, Muddy, who is handicapped. In one of her visit to her pastor Reverend Carey Carr, Helen lodges a complaint thus about how Milton himself led Peyton to drinking and all that appertains to the adult life:

... she was in shorts; I could see her hips, the cotton drawn tight against them and shameful things occurred to me: that that body which I bore . . .no, I won't repeat it. Yes, then. That same body which was part of mine (the way she was pressed against him now, you could tell already how not-so-innocently good she was at doing with men—you

know, even though I don't mean with Milton) . . . I thought of it. Yes, I did. Stretched out in the woods at Sweet Briar, astray from home and unsupervised and all the rest. So vulnerable to some sleek boy from the University. And all the rest. You know. I'm her mother. I thought all this. And I kept on watching, hating too. (127)

It all seems bizarre; father and daughter, drunken, against each other. Are they kidding, playing or is something licentious, exactly-incestuous—going on? Though Helen does not name it so, her suggestion is the same. If it was any other man except Milton, she would have been sure it was a licentious case, but it was the father and the daughter. But the immorality is still there that the father and daughter encourage each other's drinking habits, instead of trying to control it.

Of the three main characters, Milton Loftis, the father of the family, is the central voice of the novel because he, unlike Peyton and Helen, truly, although desperately, tries to keep the family together. The reader soon realizes that despite Milton's sensitivity, his strong adoration of Peyton, and his attempts to reach out to his wife, he is weak. He does not have enough will power or courage to make a radical decision that could have prevented the family's tragedy. Estranged by his prudish, frigid, and authoritative wife, he seduces Dolly Bonner, an attractive, but submissive and simple-minded, wife of a pathetic real estate agent, and hides his infidelity until confronted by his wife. Even then he is unable to commit himself wholly to one or the other.

Although Dolly gives him sexual pleasure and warmth for some time, it only causes him to be disrespectful in the eyes of his daughter. It was because of his infidelity that she comes to suspect her husband too might have liaisons outside, and this ruins her marriage life. Ultimately this all leads to her ignominious suicidal death.

Thus marital infidelity is the central cause spurring the death of the young lady. It is symptomatic of the mid-twentieth century that many homes have been destroyed more severely by the loose marital loyalty than by other material causes.

Peyton's final despair is her effort to lie down in darkness, to feel the non-feverish, effortless comfort of peace. Her role in the parable as victim of a loveless family and society, a state in which she cannot give or receive love, carries Styron's lesson. In the epigraph Styron quotes from Sir Thomas Browne's *Urn Burial* the terrifying but true words ". . . therefore it cannot be long before we lie down in darkness, and have our lights in ashes . . ." (iv). The failure of the religious community, not least of the Christian preachers, in upholding the high moral standards in their personal lives and in consequently in the lives of their congregation, has given way to other form of search of meaning in life. Youths have turned to promiscuity no less than their parents, as the case of Milton shows. His promiscuity led to that of the daughter's ultimately destroying her narrate, and life.

The solution to the disintegration of personality and society lies either in the collective effort of the people in the forms of turning to and relying on the divine promises and providence, or in each individual accepting responsibility for what action they do. The times of fakery and pretensions have only deluded the American society into darkness, chaos and meaninglessness.

Although from a general point of view history reveals a progress of civilization through actualizing the potential of human nature, Vico also emphasizes the cyclical feature of historical development. Society progresses towards perfection, but without reaching it, interrupted as it is by a break or return (*recurso*) to a relatively more primitive condition. Out of this reversal, history begins its course anew, albeit from the irreversibly higher point to which it has already attained. Vico observes that

in the latter part of the age of men that was manifest in the institutions and customs of medieval feudalism, the "barbarism" which marks the first stages of civil society returns as a "civil disease" to corrupt the body politic from within. This development is marked by the decline of popular commonwealths into bureaucratic monarchies, and, by the force of unrestrained passions, the return of corrupt manners which had characterized the earlier societies of gods and heroes. Out of this "second barbarism," however, either through the appearance of wise legislators, the rise of the fittest, or the last vestiges of civilization, society returns to the "primitive simplicity of the first world of peoples," and individuals are again "religious, truthful, and faithful" (1104-1106). Though, it is hard to see such a society that has gone through and recuperated from the malaise, Vico seems optimistic in his view of history. At this point, the novel does not seem to fit into Vichian theory. But, examined closely, one can see how America soon came out of the war-time quagmire, thus symbolizing material advancement, political ideal of freedom and democracy, and overall leadership of the world as we know and live in today.

3.3 The War Time References

The political is inextricably drawn to the literary arena, and the literary to the political one. Vico too marked it as a symptom of the Age of Men the interest and participation of the commoners in the jurisprudence, statesmanship and running of the governance. It is possible in a democratic framework that people discuss about human rights, freedom and slavery issue and the like. Gone are the Ages of Gods and Heroes where the supreme beings or the superhuman powers took control of everything. In the South, even after the World War, slavery was still an issue of some hot interest around the times the Styron wrote his first novel. Thus references to the issue are not

surprising in this context. Milton Loftis recalls his father's injunctions on the question, as he listens to the political talks:

What is your attitude, Mr. President, toward the common Negro?

Answer: Ah, since I'm a Southerner— Question: Thank you. Social security? Answer: Ah, well . . . Thank you, thank you. (My son, paradoxically enough . . . being a Southerner and a Virginian and of course a Democrat you will find yourself in the unique position of choosing between (a) those ideals implanted as right and proper in every man since Jesus Christ and no doubt before and especially in Virginians and (b) ideals inherent in you through a socio-economic culture over which you have no power to prevail; consequently I strongly urge you my son always to be a good democrat but to be a good man too if you possibly can [...]. (53)

The psychic make-up and development of the War generation is inevitably affected and moulded by the war time experiences. Their outlook of life and philosophy of living is severely damaged, as they come to realize later in retrospection. The Loftis family's involvement in the War is attested to by the fact that Milton had served in the Great War, as he himself calls it. The senselessness and murderousness of it all had to have an indelible effect on him, and this would affect his family life. Unlike the wars fought by gods and heroes, it was fought neither for some noble ideals, nor for proving one's valor. It was the outcome of the industrial and imperial powers vying for more and more colonies to secure market and raw materials for themselves. Sadly, many of the warriors did not know why they were fighting for. They knew, they were to fight, survive as far as possible and kill as many adversaries as possible because they have been told to do so. War, supported by

modern lethal long-range weapons, had lost the noble touch that it used to have in the past when it was a matter not only of victory but also of victory with honor and valor.

He had been in the Great War, having made gestures toward joining the Army which years later he shamefully confessed to himself were trifling, having been greatly relieved when his father, through government connections, got him a commission in the Army legal branch. During the more simple than he had ever imagined, he was made first lieutenant and the captain ... emerging from the war with that rank and with the colonel's daughter. (61)

The War is pervasive presence in the literature of the forties. War, however, has lost the charm it once used to have in the previous age when gods and heroes used to battle for honor and valor, to prove their chivalry. Now war has come to the banal, pursuit of economic interest. In effect, it is the exercise of the baser instincts of humanity for selfish self-promotion, rather than an occasion to exhibit their power and brinkmanship. In a world, where relationship and vows have lost significance, war as human activity has lost its meaning too.

Surveyed in this way for its message, the novel appears a grim account of the degenerated plight of mid-twentieth century American society. By extension, one could say it is representative of the plight of modern humanity too. The overall tone of the novel in terms of its presentation and description of the American lives is one of pathos and tragedy. The sense of loss sets heavily, an unholy havoc hovers over the head of the characters who lose sight of their responsibilities, and relationship and the controlling moral values. The novel is an honest account of the lost humanity in the wake of the horrendous world wars.

IV. Conclusion

In Port Warwick, a shipbuilding city of tidewater Virginia, during the last days of World War II, Milton and Helen Loftis and their family meet to bury their daughter Peyton, who committed suicide in New York City. The parents have long been alienated, in part because Milton, an unsuccessful lawyer, has been dependent on Helen, a bitter woman, in whose family house they live, in part because of tensions created by the fact that their eldest daughter, Maudie, is a retarded cripple, dead in her twentieth year. Milton had an almost unpaternal affection for Peyton, and long ago took to drink.

It traces the disintegration and decline of a formerly wealthy Southern family, the Loftises, brought into focus by the suicide of Peyton, a young woman, who is ultimately unable to break away from the family's influence. An intricate novel, showing early on Styron's gift for vivid scene-painting and his ability to sympathetically characterize a variety of characters black as well as white, it is a master stroke painting a complex nature of the postmodern human condition. The immediate setting is the funeral of one of the daughters, Peyton, a suicide. The conflicts between the narcissistic, alcoholic father and the emotionally disturbed mother, the hate between mother and daughter, and the near incestuous love of the father for Peyton—all contributors to the characters' disillusionment and the suicide itself—are unfolded in flashbacks. Though the story is told in third person, the final section is a remarkable monologue recited by Peyton before she jumps out of a window. The novel culminates in Peyton's final day, written as a fifty-page interior monologue, giving the reader access to the thoughts that pass through her minds, the memories, guilt and the sad depths of feelings, which she undergoes before her suicide.

Styron is highly regarded as a Southern writer. The injustices of the old South and the materialism of the new are two themes which figure prominently in his novels. But he was more than a regional writer. His major characters generally are decent people thrust among the cruelties of the world: slavery, war, individual madness, and violence. Though he was not particularly optimistic, most of his protagonists achieve illumination or regeneration by observing or struggling with these forces. There are critics, in fact, who see his works as religious. In addition to religious imagery, the novels suggest that when one gets in touch with his humanity he finds some sort of salvation.

They both remembered that Helen had blamed both Milton and Peyton for Maudie's death. Helen, unable to love either Milton or Peyton, had turned to religion and her minister, Carey, Carr, and, ultimately, to mental illness. Milton had become an alcoholic, and after rejection by Helen, had begun an affair with Dolly Bonner on the night of Peyton's sixteenth birthday. Peyton lost her innocence shortly thereafter, and she had followed in her father's pattern of alcoholism and sexual promiscuity. At her wedding to Harry, a Jewish New York artist, Milton was very drunk and made sexual advances to Peyton. Peyton moved to New York with Harry but separated from him because of her affairs with other men. She killed herself by leaping off a building in New York City. After the funeral, Helen and Milton had a violent confrontation at the cemetery, then Milton tried to choke Helen. They left the cemetery separately. The novel concludes with an African American religious revival service.

Though the story is told in third person, the final section is a remarkable monologue recited by Peyton before she jumps out of a window. His major characters generally are decent people thrust among the cruelties of the world: slavery, war, individual madness, and violence. Though he was not particularly optimistic, most of

his protagonists achieve illumination or regeneration by observing or struggling with these forces.

Thus, William Styron's *Lie Down in Darkness* is a novel dealing with the subtle and complex issue that modern humanity has undergone in an age beset by major world wars, and the accompanying problems of socio-economic, political, moral and religious degeneration. The ultimate solution to this problem is, as Vico's notion of history in three ages provides, to return to the more natural and naïve, religious and moral social order. The novel does not especially evoke an optimistic worldview in this regard. It presents the social and moral malaise similar to the one in the Age of Men as described by Vico in his schema of human history. However, the novel makes no effort to provide an antidote to the problems it describes. In effect, it can justifiably be said that the novel studied by this thesis is an account of the complicated human situation in the postmodern world as it has come to be called after the Second World War.

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